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TAGS: PREL EAID AF UNSC

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/AFGHANISTAN: FUNDING AFGHANISTAN'S

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

REF: STATE 61560

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Schofer for reasons 1.4 (b) a  
nd (d).

**¶1.** (C) Poloff met Marit van Zomeren (MFA Afghanistan Desk) April 6 to request augmented Dutch support for subject elections (reftel). Referring to a comprehensive list of Dutch contributions in Afghanistan for the 2001-2005 period (outlined below), van Zomeren said the GoNL had disbursed to UNDP in March four million euro for 2005 to support parliamentary elections. She recalled that Development Minister van Ardenne had recently visited the area and stated publicly that the Netherlands was one of the first to pledge and pay, so she would wait to see what other donors would now contribute before discussing an augmented Dutch contribution.

Further, van Zomeren said that van Ardenne identified other priority resource needs for Afghanistan, including disarmament, setting up the parliament, and fighting drugs. In this context, van Zomeren speculated that the 4 million euro might be the best the GoNL could do for now. She agreed that UNDP's reported shortfall is large, but suggested that UNDP and donors would find a way to come up with sufficient resources in the end through donations and ad hoc mechanisms.

(Note: Van Zomeren said that she and her department at the MFA follow the elections and its resource needs more closely than her counterparts at the Ministry for Development, which plays a role and with whom Poloff also shared reftel points.)

**¶2.** (C) Money aside, van Zomeren volunteered that the GoNL worries more about the time-line for elections and how the lethargic and cautious GOA decision-making process severely hampers preparations. She pointed out that the GOA has numerous decisions pending on issues that need resolution before election preparations can proceed, among them voting rules, seat allocations (including Kuchi nomad seats), and preparations for provincial elections. UNDP is forced to rush arrangements as soon as the GOA makes decisions on key steps, she complained.

**¶3.** (C) EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan Vendrell receives strong support from an engaged Dutch delegation, van Zomeren said. His reports to Brussels reveal he is "very worried" about the pace of preparations and that he has pressed President Karzai to act. Van Zomeren added that Vendrell reports to EU colleagues that Karzai's cabinet hesitates, fearing to make unpopular decisions.

**¶4.** (C) Finally, van Zomeren asked about the status of USG support for Afghanistan. She said that van Ardenne had heard recently from the Afghan Minister of Finance that the U.S. Senate had plans to dramatically reduce USG pledges for 2005.

**¶5.** (SBU) Summary of The Netherlands contributions to Afghanistan 2001-2005

2001: 21.4 million euro (5.5 million to UNHCR, the rest to WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, ICRC, and others)

2002: 90 million euro (35 million to Afghan reconstruction trust fund (ARTF), small amounts to rebuilding the army and police training, 10.5 million to UNHCR, 37.8 million to humanitarian projects)

2003: 54 million euro (41 million to rebuilding of which 35 million to the ARTF, 13 million to humanitarian assistance including UNHCR and NGO support);

2004: 52 million euro (45 million to rebuilding, including 35 million to the ARTF and 2.8 million for elections, and 7 million for humanitarian support including UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and NGOs);

2005 (projected): 50 million euro (25 million to the ARTF, 4 million to elections distributed to UNDP in March, 10-15 million to various projects supported by the Stability Fund such as drug control and disposal of weapons, and 4.5 million to humanitarian assistance). In addition, the Embassy of The Netherlands in Kabul has 600,000 euro to spend on security, human rights, and reconstruction projects as identified in the Embassy's program plan for 2005-2008.

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